

# **Academic Achievement for Every Student**

## **An Announcement by the**

### **Utah State Board of Education**

**August 4, 2006**

#### **Preface:**

The Utah State Board of Education recognizes its constitutional authority to supervise and govern public education in Utah. In an effort to fulfill this stewardship, the State Board has for several years, and more recently, been studying with increased intensity, the value and importance of increasing high school graduation requirements.

In harmony with the Board's vision for education in Utah and consistent with the Board's own mission statement, the Board on August 4, 2006 passed revisions to the Elementary and Secondary School Core Curriculum Board Rule which increases high school graduation requirements.

These changes are being made to help every student in Utah achieve a higher level of academic excellence and reach their individual potential.

Because of the Board's desire to help every student, and consistent with many national secondary education reform efforts and educational research, the State Board is taking action to:

- **Prepare students to become highly qualified for employment at every level within the world of work.**
- **Become better prepared and ready to enter a variety of higher education opportunities at universities, colleges, or career and technical education institutions.**
- **Help every student obtain knowledge, skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and behaviors that will help them succeed in life, enjoy a lifetime of learning, and provide leadership and citizenship in a competitive global economy.**

Because of these essential understandings the Board has taken immediate steps to enhance the educational expectations of all students.

The Utah State Board of Education also recognizes that success in the competitive environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in higher education or in the world of work, requires more than academic achievement. We urge and encourage continued enhancement and integration of essential aspects of the curriculum in every discipline and at every grade level. These include but are not limited to world languages and cultures, civic learning and engagement, character education, academic service learning, guided leadership experiences, and a variety of arts, music, and other experiences that result in a student reaching their full potential and enjoying the happiness that comes from a lifetime filled with meaningful, rigorous, and relevant learning and its application for the betterment of all mankind.

We invite all parents and family members, legislators, business leaders, education institutions, educators at every level, governmental leaders, and educational stakeholders to join us in achieving these changes in a manner that will help every student.

# **Utah State Board of Education**

## **Resolution Regarding Increased Graduation Requirements**

**AUGUST 4, 2006**

**Whereas, the Utah State Board of Education is committed to:**

- Ensuring a rigorous curriculum in the entire high school experience;
- Increasing high school graduation requirements for mathematics, science and language arts beginning with the graduating class of 2011;
- Ensuring the success of all children while recognizing the unique needs of each child;
- Improving student transitions to post-secondary education and work options;
- Providing effective and timely interventions for struggling students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities; and
- Improving the graduation rates among minorities and closing the achievement gap.

**Whereas, the Utah State Board of Education recognizes:**

- The national trend to increase graduation requirements;
- The challenges faced by schools with current funding constraints;
- The critical role of parents in the educational choices students make;
- The importance of a comprehensive high school experience for all students that includes learning opportunities in career and technical education, the arts, social sciences, health and physical education, foreign languages, and Life Skills;
- The effectiveness and importance of special education programs;
- The critical role of high school counselors in implementing these new requirements and the increased focus on Student Education Occupation Plans; and
- The current shortage of math and science teachers.

**Whereas, the Utah State Board of Education acknowledges:**

- That increased rigor and graduation requirements will have real fiscal costs and other non-fiscal “opportunity costs;”
- That increasing graduation requirements may require structural and cultural changes in some schools, and that these changes may be difficult for parents, students, and educators; and
- The costs of implementing new courses, teacher training, increased interventions, and remediation.

**Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Utah State Board of Education will:**

- Implement a comprehensive list of broad courses, including career and technical education courses, that can be used to meet the increased graduation requirements;
- Expand and develop alternative methods for students to accomplish requirements such as the electronic high school, demonstrated competency, college courses, and summer programs;
- Encourage local districts to increasingly utilize their opportunity to offer completion of appropriate credits by demonstration of competency;
- Work with rural school districts, as needed, to provide sufficient opportunity for students to meet

- the increased requirements;
- Provide leadership in aligning mathematics curriculum between higher education and public education;
  - Develop a budget resolution and a plan for the Legislature to accomplish the goals of increased rigor and effectively implement changes to graduation requirements;
  - Secure funding for the additional costs of increasing requirements from the Legislature for the potential cost of:
    - Changes in the number of students in released time during the day;
    - Interventions and remediation;
    - Professional development to increase the quality and rigor of instruction;
    - Recruitment and preparation of additional mathematics and science teachers;
    - Developing and implementing new courses in mathematics;
    - Additional school counselors;
    - “Opportunity costs” as a result of a reduction in the number of students enrolled in elective courses;
    - Impact on extra-curricular activities;
    - Expanding enrollment in the electronic high school and other programs; and
    - Class size changes due to the increased graduation requirements.

### **Utah State Board of Education Mission Statement**

Provide leadership, vision, and advocacy, so that all students have educational opportunities to meet their potential and achieve competency.

Utah Public Education - the Opportunity of a Lifetime